

# PAAS 495 | Critical Enquiry through the Lens of Short Filmmaking in Asia



Photos from the filming of *Dewi Pulang* (film credit: Candra Aditya)

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This interdisciplinary seminar will challenge you to think critically – and creatively! – about what it means to conduct research in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Drawing together a range of disciplinary perspectives, we will put scholarly discourse into dialogue with the scenarios depicted in a series of short films that address themes including: death and mourning; new styles of romantic intimacy; environmental justice; and histories of political violence & trauma. In viewing and discussing these films, we will reflect critically on conventional uses of terms and concepts such as language, culture, society, sexuality, media, power, agency, performativity, identity and the subject. The seminar will conclude with a collaborative film festival.

## Representative Readings

NB: There are **no textbooks** to buy for this course; all reading will be available online.

- Eisenstein, S.M. (1984 [1941]) *On the Composition of the Short Fiction Scenario*.
- Engchuan, R. (2020) 'A Political Dance in the Rain: Queer Short Film in Indonesia and the Cinematic Creation of Social and Material Spaces for Argument'. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*. 176(1): 7-36.
- Klima, A. (2001) 'The Telegraphic Object: Buddhist Meditation and the Redemption of Mechanical Reproduction'.
- Monizza, S. (2017) 'The Short Film Pool Project: Saving Short Films from Oblivion in the Digital Era'. *Moving Image*.
- Valjakka, M. (2021) 'Shifting Undergrounds in East and Southeast Asia'. *Cultural Studies*. 35(1): 1-26.

## Representative Films

- *Cheap Thrills* (Candra Aditya 2021; Indonesia)
- *Contestant #4* (Kaj Palanca & Jared Joven 2016; Philippines)
- *The Spring in My Life* (Cho Yeon Yun; South Korea)
- *Home* (家) (Athena Han 2013; Taiwan/Canada)
- *How to Bury a Dead Cat* (Kaizer Thng 2019; Singapore)

## Representative Assignments

- 2 short film analyses 25%
- Film festival project 35%
- Final essay 30%
- Seminar participation 10%

\*NB: These readings, films and assignments are representative, and may change between now and the start of the semester.